

Message Text

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PAGE 01 USBERL 01105 100712Z

51

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 ACDA-05 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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R 091800Z JUN 75

FM USMISSION USBERLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1033

AMEMBASSY BONN

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN UNN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PINS, WB

SUBJECT: SPLIT IN BERLIN FDP

1. SUMMARY: DISPUTE OVER CHURCH-STATE MATTER AT RECENT
FDP CONVENTION IN BERLIN LED TO SERIOUS SPLIT IN PARTY
ON RIGHT-LEFT LINES. SPLIT WILL HAVE IMPLICATIONS NOT
ONLY FOR FUTURE OF PARTY BUT OF SPD-FDP COALITION
GOVERNMENT AS WELL. END SUMMARY.

2. FDP BERLIN MET JUNE 6 AND 7 FOR BIENNIAL ELECTION
OF PARTY EXECUTIVE AND TO DISCUSS MATTERS OF CURRENT
INTEREST. CONVENTION STARTED AFTERNOON OF JUNE 6 WITH
INNOCUOUS RENDITION BY PARTY CHAIRMAN WOLFGANG LUEDER OF
ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER PAST TWO YEARS, MOST NOTABLE OF
WHICH WAS REASONABLY GOOD SHOWING IN MARCH 2 ELECTIONS
RESULTING IN PARTICIPATION WITH SPD IN COALITION GOVERNMENT.
AFTER LUEDER SPEECH, AN URGENT RESOLUTION WAS PROPOSED BY
LEFT WING OF FDP WHICH REASSERTED TRADITIONAL FDP BELIEF
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PAGE 02 USBERL 01105 100712Z

IN SEPARATION OF CHURCH FROM STATE, APPLYING THIS CONCEPT

AGAINST RECENT DECISION BY DEPARTEMENT OF JUSTICE, HEADED BY LEADER OF FDP RIGHT-WING, HERMAN OXFORT, TO CONTINUE TO DENY TO THREE LUTHERAN PRISON CHAPLAINS AND ONE LUTHERAN SOCIAL WORKER ACCESS TO PENAL FACILITIES. MOTION CONTENTED THIS WAS UNWARRANTED INTRUSION BY STATE INTO CHURCH AFFAIRS. (CLERGYMEN AND SOCIAL WORKER HAD BEEN DENIED ACCESS TO PRISONS AS RESULT OF POLICE ALLEGATION THEY HAD PASSED MESSAGES TO BAADER-MEINHOF SYMPATHISERS AROUND TIME OF ASSASSINATION OF JUDGE VON DRENKMANN LAST NOVEMBER.)

3. AFTER STORMY DEBATE, RESOLUTION PASSED BY TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY. THIS PROMPTED OXFORT EVENING OF JUNE 6 TO ANNOUNCE HE HAD WITHDRAWN HIS CANDIDACY AS DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF FDP. (PRIOR TO THIS POINT, PARTY CHAIRMAN LUEDER HAD SUPPORTED LEFT-WING RESOLUTION ON PRISON CHAPLAINS.) ON JUNE 7N, CONVENTION'S GUEST OF HONOR, FEDERAL INTERIOR MINISTER MAIHOFFER ENTERED DEBATE IN EFFORT PREVENT IRREVOCABLE SPLIT IN BERLIN PARTY. HE SUPPORTED OXFORT'S POSITION AND SUCCEEDED IN GETTING CONVENTION TO REWORK RESOLUTION CALLING SIMPLY FOR REEXAMINATION OF PRISON ACCESS OF CHAPLAINS AND SOCIAL WORKER. LUEDER SUPPORTED THIS PROPOSAL, WHICH SUBSEQUENTLY WAS PASSED BY CONVENTION. OXFORT THEN ANNOUNCED THAT IN VIEW OF CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES, HE WAS ONCE AGAIN CANDIDATE FOR DEPUTY CHAIRMAN POSITION. IN SUBSEQUENT ELECTIONS, LUEDER WAS REELECTED CHAIRMAN BY VOTE OF 140-71 (31 ABSTENTIONS; OXFORT DEPUTY CHAIRMAN BY VOTE OF 110-94 (12 ABSTENTIONS). SINCE 109 VOTES WERE NECESSARY TO ELECT, OXFORT HAD MAJORITY OF ONLY ONE VOTE.

4. BEFORE CONVENTION, IT WAS WIDELY BELIEVED FDP ELECTORAL SUCCESS HAD CAUSED INTERNAL DISSENSION TO ABATE. EVENTS AT CONVENTION, HOWEVER, DEMONSTRATE THAT LEFT-RIGHT CLEAVAGE WITHIN PARTY IS PROBABLY WORSE THAN BEFORE MARCH 2 ELECTIONS. THIS HAS CAUSED CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION ABOUT FUTURE OF BERLIN FDP AS PARTY AND POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF SPLIT ON STABILITY OF SPD-FDP COALITION SENAT.

5. COMMENT: WHILE WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE BREAKUP IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 USBERL 01105 100712Z

BERLIN FDP, LUEDER AND OXFORT ARE GOING TO HAVE TO COME TO GRIPS WITH PROBLEM. IT IS NOW CLEAR LEFT-WING IS DOMINANT (SIX OF TEN MEMBERS OF PARTY EXECUTIVE, INCLUDING LUEDER, ARE LEFTISTS) AND MAY TRY TO FORCE THROUGH MORE AND MORE DECISIONS. HOWEVER, LUEDER IS FULLY AWARE THAT WITHOUT OXFORT, COALITION WITH SPD CANNOT CONTINUE AND THAT BERLIN FDP NEEDS TO REMAIN IN COALITION TO JUSTIFY ITSELF AND ESTABLISH FIRM BASE FOR FUTURE. END COMMENT. GEORGE

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